



# Cougar Awareness

## in Fort Worth and Tarrant County

### *Safety Tips*

- Avoid hiking alone. Keep small children close and within sight at all times. Carry a sturdy walking stick.
- Walk only in well-lit parks and trails after dark.
- Discourage cougars on your property by installing outside lighting and fencing.
- Do not feed wildlife that may attract predators. Do not plant foliage favored by deer.
- Keep pets confined and supervise children and pets where cougars have been seen.
- If you encounter a cougar, do not approach.
  - Stay calm and move slowly.
  - Do not run away or turn your back.
  - Raise your arms to appear larger.
  - Back away slowly only if it is safe to do so. The cougar may move away from you if you remain still.
  - Pick up children so they do not run away and trigger an attack.
  - If the cougar becomes aggressive, throw stones, sticks, etc. to frighten it off. Wave your arms, brandish your walking stick, shout and beat the brush with the stick. Do not bend over or turn your back.
  - Fight back if you are attacked. Cougars can be driven off by fighting with a stick. If knocked down, try to regain your footing.



**Description:** The cougar, also called mountain lion, puma, painter, panther or catamount, is the largest cat native to north central Texas. Large males can be over 7 feet long from nose to tip of tail. Average males weigh 100-150 lbs. while females average 55-90 lbs. They have solid tawny brown coats and long tails. Kittens have spots that fade as they mature. Bobcats are much smaller, have short tails and spotted coats. Although sometimes reported, cougars are not black. No one has ever killed or captured a “black panther” in North America.

**Habitat:** Cougars have adapted to a variety of environments including pine forests, mountain terrain and the desert. In urban and suburban areas, they stay in heavily brushy or forested areas. Occasionally, they are spotted traveling along waterways in the county. Although part of Fort Worth legend, the cougar (panther) is rarely seen in the city. Except during the breeding season, cougars are solitary and do not travel in packs. Cubs remain with their mothers for up to two years.

**Diet:** Cougars feed primarily on deer, killing about one deer a week. They also prey on smaller animals such as skunks, armadillos and raccoons. In some areas, they feed on livestock. Roaming dogs and cats can be easy prey in urban or suburban areas.

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### Report sightings and questions regarding cougars in Fort Worth to:

**Animal Care and Control at 817-392-3737 or  
DFW Wildlife Coalition at 972-234-WILD.**

**Report ANY animal bite to Animal Care and Control at  
817-392-3737.**